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Seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War

Security Council
Seventieth year

Letter dated 6 February 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement by the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation concerning the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of prisoners from the Auschwitz-Birkenau (Oswiecim) concentration camp and International Holocaust Remembrance Day (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the statement circulated as a document of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 129, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) V. **Churkin**

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Annex to the letter dated 6 February 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation concerning the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of prisoners from the Oswiecim concentration camp and International Holocaust Remembrance Day

Seventy years ago, on 27 January 1945, the Red Army liberated the prisoners held in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp near the Polish town of Oswiecim. The wholesale extermination of the peaceful population and prisoners of war of various nationalities, primarily Jews, Roma and Slavs, in the Nazi death camps was without historical precedent. On this day, we mourn and pay tribute to the memory of those who were ruthlessly destroyed by the Nazi State machine.

It was no coincidence that 27 January — the date of the liberation of Oswiecim by the Red Army — was declared International Holocaust Remembrance Day by resolution of the United Nations General Assembly 10 years ago. As the President of the Russian Federation stated, with that unanimous decision, the international community expressed its determination to pass down to future generations the truth about the barbaric crimes of Nazism and to protect humanity against the evils of genocide, racism and extremism.

The General Assembly resolution on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, adopted on the initiative of the Russian Federation on 18 December 2014 at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, was also aimed at preserving historical memory and forestalling any attempt to distort or falsify the outcome of the Second World War in the interests of political expediency. It is not only our duty but also a duty owed by the international community to those who sacrificed their lives in the battle against Nazism for the sake of peace and the triumph of human ideals. It is the obligation of all States to future generations, who must know the price that was paid to achieve that great Victory.

The fact that a bigoted theory of racial supremacy arose within European civilization demonstrates once again that neither technological advancement nor a highly developed culture are guarantees against xenophobia and racism. Humankind must remain vigilant.

The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation notes with great concern that repeated attempts are now being made to falsify our common history by placing equal blame for the outbreak of the Second World War on Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, thereby putting the perpetrators and the victims of Nazism on an equal footing. That is an indication that present-day Europe provides fertile ground for the rise of nationalistic and race-based aggression and intolerance, and violations of the rights of ethnic minorities and their forced assimilation. Religious symbols are being denigrated and the shameful institution of so-called non-citizenship continues to exist.

It is deeply unfortunate that an attempt is being made to draw the Ukrainian people into this destructive process. The leader of the Ukrainian Government has publicly blamed the Soviet Union for the "invasion" of Germany and Ukraine, thereby insulting first and foremost the Ukrainian people, who made a unique contribution to the shared victory and bore more fully than other nations the brunt of Nazi aggression. It is disappointing that these absurd and unacceptable views — for which there is no historical explanation or moral justification — expressed by a representative of the current Ukrainian leadership have to date not been condemned by the leaders of most European countries, whose silence is reminiscent of the position taken by their predecessors towards the Nazi aggressors on the eve of the Second World War.

The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation firmly condemns such shameful and provocative statements and calls upon political and community leaders who share true human values, without exceptions or double standards, and above all our colleagues in the parliaments of European countries:

Not to allow the memory of the millions who died during the Second World War at the hands of Nazi criminals and their accomplices to be besmirched, and to firmly condemn any plans or actions to that effect;

To prevent the glorification of former members of the Waffen SS organization, Nazi, neo-Nazi, fascist and Banderite movements, and all other forms of collaboration with or support for Nazism;

To hold accountable anyone who allows denial of the Holocaust and genocide against "non-Aryan" peoples or who distorts historical facts, insults the memory of the liberators and glorifies their executioners.

The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation believes that only the united will of the peoples of the world can withstand the threat of neo-Nazism and political extremism at the State level when politicians and parties come to power that promote nationalistic ideology and justify the crimes of the past.

The historical lessons of the Holocaust must be neither forgotten nor misrepresented.

Federation Council of the Federal Assembly
of the Russian Federation